

## **Appendix E - Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Herd Management Areas**

There are 4 Herd Areas (HA) and 7 Herd Management Areas (HMA) managed by BLM in Arizona. These areas are the Tassi-Gold Butte HMA (Arizona Strip FO); Big Sandy HMA, Black Mountain HMA, and Cerbat HA (Kingman FO); Harquahala HA, Lake Pleasant HMA and Painted Rock HA (Phoenix FO); Alamo HMA and Havasu HMA (Lake Havasu FO); and Cibola-Trigo HMA and Little Harquehala HA (Yuma FO). Five of the areas are described in the Affected Environment section of current Land Use Plans. Descriptions of the other six areas are presented below.

### **Alamo**

The Alamo HMA lies in west central Arizona, on lands adjoining Alamo Lake and portions of the Bill Williams, Santa Maria and Big Sandy rivers. The Alamo contains 341,034 acres of land, and the burro population is estimated to be 350. The wild burros roam freely throughout the area, which is largely steep, rocky and rugged. The lower areas contain gentle slopes cut with broad sandy washes. Sonoran Desert vegetation, such as palo verde and ironwood trees, dominate the washes. Summers are hot, with occasional temperatures exceeding 120 degrees. Wild burros share this habitat with desert bighorn sheep, desert mule deer, coyotes, fox, jackrabbits and a variety of small mammals. Other animals that can be found in the area include reptiles such as the desert tortoise and several species of lizards and rattlesnakes. The area is also home to a variety of birds, including the bald eagle and southwestern willow flycatcher.

### **Harquehala**

The Harquahala HA lies six miles south of Aguila, Arizona, on Eagle Eye Road, 25 miles west of Wickenburg, Arizona, on US Highway 60. The wild burros inhabit the Harquahala Mountains and surrounding foothills and valleys. The Harquahala HA consists of 126,000 acres and extends from the Harquahala Mountains on the north side to the Big Horn Mountains on the south. The population is estimated to be about 90 burros. The Harquahala Mountains is a relatively low granite range, surrounded by broad desert basins. The average precipitation is about five inches a year with summer temperatures exceeding 125 degrees. The desert vegetation consists of typical upper Sonoran Desert which includes palo verde, ironwood, ocotillo, mesquite, creosote bush, triangle leaf bursage and the giant saguaro cactus. In addition, the Harquahala Mountains contain pockets of Interior Chaparral Subdivision of the Warm-Temperate scrublands typified by jojoba, shrub live oak, sugar sumac and mountain mahogany. Because of the high diversity of species, the area has been identified as a Special Botanical Area. The area contains numerous springs that provide water for the wild burros, livestock and other wildlife. Riparian vegetation such as cottonwood, willow, cattails and bullrush occur at many of the spring sites. Wild burros share their habitat with other wildlife such as desert bighorn sheep, desert mule deer, bobcat, mountain lion, coyotes, gray fox, Gambel's quail, dove, various bat species, desert tortoise and other non-game species.

### **Cibola-Trigo**

Spreading across the border of Arizona and California, the Cibola-Trigo HMA extends from Imperial Dam, west of the Colorado River, to Walters Camp in California. Located primarily between US 95 and the Colorado River and Interstates 8 and 10, the HMA is about 20 miles north of Yuma, Arizona. The Cibola-Trigo HMA is comprised of nearly one million acres of the lower Sonoran Desert. The population of burros in this HMA today, is about 300. During the summer months, the burros are concentrated along the Colorado River, or other permanent water source. In late fall or early winter, depending upon rainfall, they disperse throughout the HMA. They begin their movement back to the river about May or June as the temperatures rise and the Mesquite beans mature. The wild horses remain near a permanent water source year round. There are approximately 130 wild horses the HMA. In Arizona, the Cibola-Trigo HMA supports both wild burros and horses. While in southwestern California, only the wild burro roams

between the river and the Chocolate/Mules and Picacho Herd Management areas. The HMA in California is dominated by intricately dissected alluvial fans and bajadas adjacent to the Colorado River. The uplands support sparse stands of creosote, ocotillo and palo verde. The many drainages emptying into the river support dense stands of desert trees including palo verde, ironwood, catclaw acacia and mesquite. Immediately adjacent to the river are thick stands of salt cedar, phragmites and arrow weed. Further from the river, the bajadas give way to rugged volcanic mountains. Winters in the HMA are typically mild, but summers can be brutal with temperatures exceeding 125 degrees. Wild burros share this habitat with desert bighorn sheep and desert mule deer. Other animals that can be found in the area include desert tortoise, several species of rattle snakes and a variety of birds and lizards.

### **Havasu**

The Havasu Herd Management Area lies in west central Arizona along the Colorado and Bill Williams rivers. The HMA is split into two units by the Colorado River. The Havasu HMA is also adjacent to the Chemehevi Herd Management Area on the California side. The Havasu HMA consists of 450,790 acres of Lower Colorado Sonoran Desert. The Arizona side of the HMA is 372,568 acres, while the California side of the HMA encompasses 78,222. The population of burros in this HMA is estimated to be about 540 animals (240 in Arizona and 300 in California). In this area, some burros possess the shoulder cross characteristic of the ancestral Nubian wild ass and many have leg barrings associated with the Somali wild ass. In the summer months, the burros concentrate in the critical area, which is generally within one and a half miles of all major water sources. During cooler months, the burros normally move into the mountains and scatter throughout the area. The burros roam freely throughout the area, which is characterized by arroyo-scarred alluvial fans to steep and rocky volcanic mountains. There are four major vegetation community types found within the HMA. These include open hills characterized by creosote bush, primary and secondary wash characterized by palo verde and burro bush, and secondary wash of predominately palo verde and creosote. Summer temperatures can exceed 125 degrees, with about 100 days per year of above 100 degrees. Burros share this habitat with desert bighorn sheep and desert mule deer. Other animals in the area include small mammals, desert tortoises, several species of rattle snakes, a variety of birds, including the southwestern willow flycatcher, lizards and amphibians.

### **Lake Pleasant**

The Lake Pleasant HMA is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Phoenix, west of Interstate 17 and north of State Highway 74. The HMA lies northeast of Lake Pleasant, and consists of 103,000 acres of Sonoran Desert. The population of burros remains fairly constant in this HMA at about 250 animals. The majority of the burros in the HMA congregate in or around Lake Pleasant Regional Park due to the abundance of forage and water. The area consists of rugged mountains, numerous small canyons and open rolling hills. The vegetation is typical of the upper Sonoran Desert consisting of palo verde and mixed cacti. Wildlife species include wild burros, desert mule deer, javelina and mountain lions. Other animals found in the area include small mammals, songbirds, amphibians and reptiles.

### **Little Harquahala**

The Little Harquahala HA is located southeast of Salome, Arizona, between U.S. Highway 60 and Interstate 10. The HA includes the extreme western portion of the Harquahala Mountains and a majority of the Little Harquahala Mountains. The HA includes 66,000 acres of upper Sonoran desert and consists of desert mountains, separated by the Centennial Wash. Based on tracks and sightings, the population of burros is estimated to be about 50. The area is in mountainous terrain, covered with palo verde, ironwood and catclaw acacia. In this HA, burros stay in the mountains on either side of Centennial Wash during mild winters. The area receives about five inches of rain a year, mostly during the winter months. In the summer, when temperatures exceed 100 degrees, the burros move down into the valley. Burros share this HA with desert bighorn sheep and desert mule deer. Other animals that can be found in the area include the desert tortoise, several species of rattle snakes and a variety of birds and other reptiles.